

Dr. Jonathan V. Wright's

NUTRITION & HEALING

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Could a stroke steal your future? Know your risk and prevent it from happening!

By Jonathan V. Wright, M.D.

You probably know someone who's had a stroke—wheelchair bound or walking difficulty, unable to use an arm or a leg (or both). In seconds, a stroke can render you physically helpless, without the ability to speak or even to smile. It always makes me sad to see a patient who was active, funny, and independent suddenly turn into a shell of their former self after a stroke. It can literally steal your quality of life—with absolutely no warning.

But while strokes sneak up on us, we are certainly not defenseless against them. By following some simple guidelines, you can significantly reduce your risk of suffering a stroke.

Not all strokes are created equal, but they are preventable

First, let me clear up a common misconception that allows far too many of us to assume we're "stroke-proof." It's not true that you're only at risk if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels. While high blood pressure is a major risk factor, men and women with perfectly normal blood pressure have strokes, too. Other non-dietary stroke risk factors include tobacco smoking, heavy alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity.

To understand how to avoid a stroke, you need to understand how it happens.

There are at least two "basic" types of stroke: Hemorrhagic (bleeding) and ischemic/thrombotic (lack of blood flow associated with a clot).

So, either a blood vessel in the brain breaks, spewing blood into

"While high blood pressure is a major risk factor, men and women with perfectly normal blood pressure have strokes, too."

brain tissue where it doesn't belong, or the blood vessel gets blocked with a clot, depriving an area of the brain of blood. Or, just maybe, the blood vessel goes into an intense spasm with the same result. In any of these cases, the affected area of the brain can't function, and often dies.

Common sense tells us that strengthening blood vessels will reduce their risk of breaking and causing hemorrhagic stroke. Common sense also says that reducing the tendency of blood to clot abnormally, and increasing blood's clot-busting potential will reduce the risk of thrombotic/

ischemic strokes. Reducing the tendency of blood vessels to spasm will likely reduce your risk of stroke, too. But how can you possibly do all of that when you can't even see the area needing improvement, you might wonder?

I'll admit, the results aren't quite as easy to measure—in a visual sense. You can't stand in front of a mirror and see if your blood's ability to clot has been regulated. These results are ones you're more likely to feel in the form of more energy and an overall sense of well being. And even better: you don't need a gym membership to get your blood vessels "pumped up" and strong. This is where Mother Nature steps in and gives us all the tools we need to get strong and to protect ourselves from strokes.

Forget pumping iron... strengthen your blood vessels with vitamins, minerals, and herbs

There are many, many nutrients and herbs that help to strengthen blood vessels; I'll just mention a few of the basics and particularly important ones here. Let's start with vitamin C.

Without enough vitamin C blood vessels simply break down. Although only a few milligrams

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Nutrition & Healing is dedicated to helping you keep yourself and your family healthy by the safest and most effective means possible. Every month, you'll get information about diet, vitamins, minerals, herbs, natural hormones, natural energies, and other substances and techniques to prevent and heal illness, while prolonging your healthy life span.

A graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan Medical School (1969), Dr. Jonathan V. Wright has been practicing natural and nutritional medicine at the Tahoma Clinic in Kent, Washington, since 1973. Based on enormous volumes of library and clinical research, along with tens of thousands of clinical consultations, he is exceptionally well-qualified to bring you a unique blending of the most up-to-date information and the best and still most effective natural therapies developed by preceding generations.

Nutrition & Healing cannot improve on these famous words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The inalienable right to life must include the right to care for one's own life. The inalienable right to liberty must include the right to choose whatever means we wish to care for ourselves. In addition to publishing the best of information about natural health care, *Nutrition & Healing* urges its readers to remember their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and freedom of choice in health care. This information is published to help in the effort to exercise these inalienable rights, and to warn of ever-present attempts of both government and private organizations to restrict them.

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of vitamin C daily are enough to prevent blood vessels from breaking easily, it takes much more to maximize blood vessel strength—though research has yet to determine precisely how much more. Since there's no definitive conclusion on this point yet, and since vitamin C is so important for so many reasons, I have *two* recommendations. Choose the one that works best for you.

If you want to optimize health and even fight the aging process, take "bowel tolerance" levels of vitamin C. ("Bowel tolerance" is as much vitamin C as your intestines will tolerate without provoking excess gas and loose stools.) For most people this is between three and nine grams a day. You should take the amount you need in divided—between two and four—doses daily.

However, I understand that the "bowel tolerance" amount can be quite large and involve taking quite a few pills every day, which some people are hesitant to do. So it isn't absolutely essential to take that much (though it will make a considerable improvement in your health, I guarantee it). But the bare minimum you do need to take is 1 gram of vitamin C, twice daily.

Just like thunder and lightening, vitamin C and flavonoids go together for a reason

Where there's vitamin C, there's flavonoids...at least in nature. Vitamin C and flavonoids are always found together, probably because when they're together they work better to keep you healthy. In the 1930s, flavonoids were found to correct the fragility of the smallest blood vessels (capillaries) in cases of scurvy. Over the decades, they have been found to strengthen all sizes of blood vessels, as well as ligaments, tendons, connective tissue, and many other body tissues.

So where do you find flavonoids? Check the bowl of fruit on your table, or the "crisper" in your refrigerator. Flavonoids (along with carotenoids) give fruits and vegetables most of their colors. The best way to ensure you're getting enough flavonoids to reduce your stroke risk is to eat as many differently colored fruits and vegetables as possible.¹

You've read this from me many times before, but here it is again: Diets high in vegetables and fruits and lower in animal protein are associated with fewer diseases of all kinds, including stroke.² In a 12-year study of 859 men and women, *only one additional* serving of vegetables or fruits daily lowered the risk of stroke by 40 percent!³ (And just as a side note while I'm talking about your diet, consider that eating whole grain products lowers the risk of ischemic stroke, but refined flour products give no protection.⁴)

Herbs and minerals: More blood-vessel-strengthening tricks up Mother Nature's sleeve

Sometimes even I'm amazed at just how many options nature has for us (and I've been doing this for 29 years now!). In addition to vitamin C and flavonoids, there are a number of herbs—and at least one mineral—you can take to help strengthen your blood vessels. You've heard of most of these before, so instead of spending a lot of time giving you their history, I'll just outline

Citations available upon request and on NH website.

what they do and how much you'll need for maximum stroke protection.

Hawthorn has been is the No.1 traditional European botanical for blood vessel strengthening for centuries. "Modern" scientific research confirms hawthorn's effect on the heart and blood vessels.⁵ Although there are many hawthorn supplements available, I usually recommend Hawthorn Solid Extract by Scientific Botanicals, a local Seattle firm (with which I have no connection), one teaspoonful daily.

Ginkgo has been most heavily advertised for preservation and improvement of memory, but it's been demonstrated beyond a doubt that it also strengthens blood vessels and improves blood flow all over the body. Take 80 milligrams of a standardized ginkgo preparation, twice daily.

Ginkgo helps prevent strokes in other ways, too, by helping to prevent clots and blood vessel spasms. It's even helpful *after* a stroke has occurred, by reducing brain swelling, promoting better ATP (energy) production and blood sugar use following ischemia (lack of blood flow).⁶ A word of caution here: If you are taking a blood-thinning medication, consult your physician before adding ginkgo to your routine.

While flavonoids strengthen the blood vessels themselves, centella asiatica (also known as gotu kola) strengthens the connective tissue sheath that surrounds blood vessels, thus providing an additional layer of protection against blood vessel rupture.⁷ Centella also reduces hardening of the blood vessels and improves blood flow. Take 60 to 120 milligrams of a standardized preparation daily.

It's also important for larger blood vessels to maintain their elasticity, and not become hardened or stiffened. Copper is absolutely essential to the formation and repair of elastic tissue throughout the body, including blood vessels. Make sure you're taking at least 2 milligrams daily. But you may not need to take a separate copper supplement. Most multiple vitamin-mineral supplements have at least 2 milligrams, so check the label on yours before buying more.

Keeping clots out of your strengthened blood vessels

Strong blood vessels are the first part of the stroke prevention equation. Next on the list is eliminating blood clots and keeping things flowing smoothly in your body.

The essential fatty acids contained in fish oil lessen the risk of abnormal blood clotting. Fish oil makes platelets (the tiny blood elements that clump together into clots) more "slippery," so they can't stick together as easily. Fish oil literally does a "lube job" on platelets.

Citations available upon request and on NH website.

Stroke prevention in one easy-to-follow outline

Here's what you need to do:

- eat more vegetables and fruits
- eat whole grains (not refined flour products)
- eat more fish (and reduce animal protein)
- quit smoking
- cut alcohol consumption to no more than one drink daily
- exercise!

And here's what you need to take:

- vitamin C: 1,000 milligrams twice daily (more for optimal health)
- cod liver oil: 1 tablespoonsful daily always with
- vitamin E: 600 IU daily
- ginkgo (standardized extract): 80 milligrams twice daily
- hawthorne solid extract: one teaspoonful daily
- centella asiatica (standardized extract): 60 to 120 milligrams daily
- turmeric: 20 (or more) milligrams daily (or put turmeric into your cooking regularly)
- magnesium: 250-400 milligrams daily
- copper: 2 milligrams daily
- nattokinase: 138 milligrams three times daily

Eating fish two or three times weekly is the best way to get a start on fish oil consumption. However, if you're really concerned about stroke prevention, take 1 to 1 1/2 tablespoonsful of cod liver oil daily. (Of course, cod liver oil helps prevent osteoporosis, reduce your risk of heart attack and heart rhythm disorders, and many other things, too!) And remember, additional vitamin E should always accompany essential fatty acid supplementation. Take at least 600 IU of vitamin E for the amount of cod liver oil noted above.

"Fibrinogen" is a precursor of "fibrin," a key element in clot formation. Elevated levels of fibrinogen are an "independent risk factor" for easy blood clotting. Turmeric helps reduce abnormally high levels of fibrinogen.⁸ Using turmeric in cooking is the easiest way to use a turmeric supplement. You only need 20 milligrams daily—which is about 1/14,000 of an ounce—to do the job. If you'd rather take a turmeric supplement, that's fine. Most turmeric supplement capsules contain much more than the "necessary" amount, but, fortunately,

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Stroke risks and prevention

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there are no known turmeric overdoses.

The Japanese soy-cheese clot buster

Until very recently, there have been no known substances (except for incredibly expensive, intravenously administered ones) actually effective in *breaking up* clots once they start to form in our blood vessels. But thanks to the persistent research of Professor Hiroyuki Sumi of Miyozaki Medical College, Japan, a safe, effective, orally administered enzyme that breaks down the fibrin component of clots has very recently become available.

Professor Sumi discovered a potent fibrinolytic (clot-busting) enzyme naturally present in the soy cheese, natto, a food consumed in Japan for at least two thousand years.⁹ In one study, volunteers ate either natto (200 grams, approximately 7 ounces) or took 1,300 milligrams of nattokinase, the active enzyme in natto. Both groups demonstrated significantly improved “clot-busting” activity that lasted for approximately eight to twelve hours.¹⁰

As I said above, natto has been eaten by millions of people for centuries. So even though it’s “new” to nearly all of us in the United States, we can safely add this soy cheese to our list of stroke-preventing foods. I recommend several ounces three to four times weekly along with regular consumption of fish and other stroke preventing foods. Of course, as a traditional Japanese food (and one that’s referred to even there, with its sour flavor and stringy texture, as an “acquired taste”), you may have a hard time finding it in your local health food store or ethnic-food grocer.

If you can’t find natto, or prefer to forego acquiring a taste for it, you can now get it in supplement form. Nattokinase supplements are being marketed by Allergy Research Group in 138 milligram capsules, with a suggested use of four capsules daily. While this quantity is significantly lower than the amount used in Professor Sumi’s research, when you add it to the other supplemental items I’ve outlined for you so far, it should still be of significant help. Nattokinase is available through Tahoma Clinic Dispensary (with which I’m of course affiliated) and other outlets carrying Allergy Research Group products.

Stroke risk: more than just a plumbing problem!

So far, I’ve been using common-sense “plumbing principles”: Stronger “pipes” with smooth flowing

blood will cut the risk of stroke. But blood vessels aren’t just pipes, they’re alive, and can do at least two things a regular pipe can’t. Blood vessels can spasm, and they can become inflamed.

Magnesium is by far the most important essential nutrient needed to prevent spasm in your blood vessels. And even though deep green vegetables are excellent sources of magnesium, most of us should be taking an additional 250-400 milligrams daily, not only to help prevent blood vessel spasm and potential stroke, but also to reduce the risk of nearly every cardiovascular problem known. (But please don’t exceed this amount of magnesium...see Clinical Tip #80, *Magnesium: Are you getting too much of a good thing?*, December 2000.)

Cardiovascular research has increasingly focused on blood vessel inflammation as a triggering event for blood vessel damage. It appears that much of the plaque in blood vessels (which was previously thought to be caused solely by excess cholesterol and other blood lipids) is actually formed as the body’s response to inflammation.

If you’re eating fish and taking cod liver oil or other omega-3 fatty acid containing oils (along with vitamin E) you’ve got this one covered already—these all help prevent blood vessel inflammation from occurring in the first place.

But just to make sure, tests for cardiovascular inflammation such as “C-reactive protein” are (or should be) part of your routine check-ups. Ask your doctor if he’s ever given you this test. If he hasn’t, tell him you’d like to have it done on a regular basis.

The sum of the stroke prevention equation

I know the items mentioned throughout this article add up to a hefty, and probably overwhelming, list. So, I tried to boil it down for you at least somewhat in the box on page three. Read through it and take the advice to heart. Taking action now to prevent a future stroke, and all of the heartache it can bring with it, is well worth the effort! JVV

**To make an appointment with a Tahoma Clinic doctor, call the Tahoma Clinic:
tel. (425)264-0059.**

**For more information on the services available, visit the clinic’s website at
www.tahoma-clinic.com**

Citations available upon request and on NH website.

The surprising herb that helps heal wounds, eczema, and IBS. And you thought it was just a tea...

By Kerry Bone, FNIMH, FNHAA

They warned you not to do it, that a skull and crossbones tattoo emblazoned across your shoulder blade might lose its “charm” after a few years (or a few minutes). And now you wish you’d listened as you sit recovering from the removal with a skull-and-crossbones-shaped wound where the tattoo used to be. I realize telling you to put chamomile extract on that wound probably sounds just as uncool as the advice not to get the thing in the first place. After all, shouldn’t someone “dangerous” enough to adorn themselves with a picture of a skull and crossbones be tough enough for the kind of healing they do in the movies, where someone takes a swig of rotgut whiskey, then dumps the rest of the bottle right on the open sore? Well, as tame as it might seem, chamomile packs a powerful punch when it comes to healing wounds and other skin irritations like eczema and hemorrhoids. (And its soothing effects on the stomach are nothing to scoff at either.)

Chamomile is widely known, especially in Europe, for its use as an herbal tea. But what is not as well known is its importance as a remedy for digestive and skin problems. The secret to chamomile’s healing power lies in the specific type of chamomile used: it needs to be the right type of chamomile. There are two species of chamomile used as herbs, the German and the Roman. German chamomile is the main therapeutic species. Its botanical name is *Matricaria* coming from the Latin meaning “beloved mother,” which probably testifies to another one of

its popular uses as a catch-all remedy for children.

If you’ve ever seen a chamomile flower, you know they’re not blue (in fact, they look very much like daisies, with white petals and yellow centers). But curiously, the best quality German chamomile gives a deep blue oil due to the presence of an intensely blue plant chemical known as chamazulene.

The chamazulene in the chamomile oil is anti-inflammatory, but most of the therapeutic value of the oil for digestive and skin problems is attributed to another phytochemical known as bisabolol or levomenol. Only a few varieties of German chamomile have an oil which is rich in both chamazulene and bisabolol and can deliver the full therapeutic spectrum of this wonderful herb. These high-grade varieties are sought after by herbal clinicians. When they do manage to get their hands on some, their patients show some remarkable results...

From eczema to surgical incisions—chamomile soothes all kinds of skin inflammation

Before you forget about my advice to use chamomile to help tattoo-removal wounds heal, consider that German researchers have actually tested it for this very purpose. It was a small trial, made up of only 14 patients (I guess more Germans like to keep their body art than have it removed). But the results were “statistically significant” enough—speeding drying time and reducing wound weeping—for the study to be published in a prominent German dermatology journal (*Zeitschrift*

fur Hautkrankheiten).¹

But even if you don’t have a tattoo (or want to get one you do have removed), the high grade varieties of German chamomile are considered to be one of the best herbal applications for any type of skin inflammation. It is used in creams, lotions and even put in baths.

Another group of researchers tested standardized chamomile cream versus more mainstream steroidal and non-steroidal topical preparations in the maintenance therapy of eczema. Chamomile cream worked better than the steroid preparation and the topical NSAID ointment. And it proved to be just as effective as hydrocortisone.²

Chamomile has even proven itself for wound healing in rather ...uncomfortable...places on the body that have undergone surgery. In an open, randomized trial, standardized chamomile ointment was as effective as the commonly used 5% dexpanthenol cream in healing episiotomy wounds.³ Another trial compared several procedures for treating hemorrhoids and found that the group receiving application of standardized chamomile ointment in conjunction with the surgical procedures experienced the best healing.⁴

A safe, effective, natural treatment for even the toughest cases of IBS

I mainly use the German chamomile to treat my patients’ digestive problems. The oil in chamomile relieves spasms and helps alleviate gastrointestinal pain, so it’s not surprising that herbalists have referred to

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Heal wounds, eczema, and IBS

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chamomile as the “mother of the gut,” suitable for a wide range of digestive problems.

Studies have shown it to be very effective for diarrhea.⁵ And its effects on digestive muscular function coupled with its anti-inflammatory activity also make it an ideal treatment for reflux and peptic ulcers.

But one of chamomile’s most valuable applications is for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). IBS is a very common disorder with very few effective treatment options (keep a look-out for more natural alternatives to treat IBS in next month’s edition of *Nutrition & Healing*). Luckily, chamomile can work wonders for even the most stubborn cases. But, I have to stress once again that to get the full healing potential of chamomile for IBS (or any of the conditions discussed in this article) it must be the right quality—high therapeutic grade rich in bisabolol and chamazulene. I always use chamomile as a liquid extract because the therapeutic oils can be readily lost from tablets and capsules.

Could that cup of tea give you hay fever?

If you have a history of allergy, especially to ragweed or other members of the daisy family, you should be careful with chamomile, especially the tea, since chamomile is a member of the daisy family. The pollen from the flowers of this family is well known

to cause allergic reactions such as hayfever, rashes or asthma. In rare cases (only a few have been reported) the tea can cause anaphylactic shock in people prone to allergies. The alcohol used to make herbal tinctures tends to remove or “deactivate” the allergy-inducing pollen proteins in chamomile, so herbal liquids are less likely to cause allergic reactions.

Although chamomile is used successfully to treat skin irritation and inflammation, in some cases its topical use can also cause rashes. Fortunately, when researchers took a closer look at the overall data on chamomile-induced skin rashes, they concluded that genuine chamomile allergy was not as prevalent as first thought.⁶ Out of over 200 patients tested, only five had reactions that “might possibly” have had something to do with chamomile (but most likely were caused by ointment bases and/or other constituents of the preparations).

So once again, your best bet is to use a strong liquid preparation of a German chamomile rich in bisabolol and chamazulene. Be careful using chamomile if you have a history of daisy allergy, but otherwise it is a safe and effective treatment for digestive problems and skin inflammation. Since this variety of chamomile extract is a hot commodity in the herbal world, you may have a hard time finding it in health food stores. The American Botanical Council (512-926-4900; www.herbalgram.org) may be able to help you find a source. **KB**

CLINICAL TIP 105

The bees’ secret for healing burns (including sunburn)

I’ve never seen anything achieve results in healing burns like the natural, beeswax and “bee product” based ointment called Whole Skin Ointment, which is used extensively in Chinese burn clinics. I can’t say for sure exactly what they mean by “bee products,” which sounds somewhat disturbingly vague, but the miraculous recoveries these mysterious ingredients facilitate certainly make up for the ambiguity.

I’ve known about Whole Skin Ointment for years, but sometimes the effectiveness of this burn treatment still surprises me. I remember this letter received in 1999:

Dr. Wright:

Several months ago, we contacted you concerning a close friend who had suffered a full thickness burn over a large area on his buttocks and upper thighs from falling asleep while sitting on an electric blanket. We were very concerned about how the skin was going to be able to heal...and whether he was going to need skin grafts...

We had been providing him with antibiotics to prevent infection, but decided we had better seek a physician’s advice. You advised us to...use [Whole Skin Ointment] that would aid skin regrowth over the burn.

We just wanted to let you know that the preparation worked perfectly! We were amazed, never having seen anything like this before. Over a period of a few months, the entire thickness of skin regrew from the edges in, finally covering the burned out area completely with entirely normal skin and almost no scarring. The result is much better than skin grafting (even if enough normal skin had been found to do the grafts) and at a far lower cost...

---Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw, (full names used by permission)

The case described in the above letter was obviously a very serious one. But Whole Skin Ointment works just as well for other burns—of all types and severity, including sunburn. Whole Skin Ointment is distributed in the USA by Chi Enterprises.

Citations available upon request and on NH website.

Here come the food police!

A chorus of “nanny-state” believers has been advocating government intervention in our kitchens for at least a decade now. If they get their way, things could get ugly. Imagine a newly organized Vegetarian Party electing candidates who plan to tax all animal protein. Of course, the Meat and Potatoes Party politicians will battle back, subsidizing cattle feedlots. And not to be left out, teenagers will demand to vote at age 16 to prevent crushing taxation of pizza, burgers, and potato chips. McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, and Jello will suddenly join trial lawyers and medical associations as top-ranking Congressional campaign contributors.

Fooooood fight!

All of this is *very* possible if we allow yet another government “regulate, tax, and subsidize” scheme to pass because “it’s good for us,” and especially “good for the children.”

How could all this happen? Here’s how, taken straight from the pages of a major nutrition journal for health care professionals:

“...legislating against certain types of advertising, restricting grocery store promotional ‘freebies’ to healthful foods...And it could go further. Studies show that sales of tobacco and alcohol vary negatively with price. The most effective actions will probably be economic, involving subsidies and taxation...governments should explore taxing non-nutritious items while subsidizing fruit, vegetables, and whole grains...We must go beyond health promotion and develop a strategy based on government policies. Such public health policies will extend to the school, the supermarket, and the airwaves. By means of taxation and subsidies, people will be encouraged to lead a healthier lifestyle...”¹

This kind of thinking is straight

out of the worst totalitarian states, whose supporters believe that government always knows best... and has the right to enforce it, whether we like it or not. While your mother has the birthright to tell you to eat your vegetables, and I’ll encourage you to make those vegetables organic, the government should stay strictly out of our kitchens...and the rest of the house!

While I’m 100 percent in favor of a healthful diet, I’m even more in favor of a fundamental, founding principle of the United States of America: individual freedom. Individual freedom *must* include the freedom to eat well or poorly, as each individual chooses. I’ll continue to advocate the best of nutrition for you and your family, but I’ll always support your right to choose whether to follow my advice or not! JYW

Natural Response

Could your thyroid problem be an allergic reaction?

Q: *I have been receiving your newsletter and have learned a lot of valuable information that I have been able to use for both my patients and myself. One of my staff members has been diagnosed with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis. Would you please give advice as to how she can treat this. Thanks.*

----Dr. L. L., via e-mail

A: We’ve learned that allergic reactions to grains could actually cause several different types of autoimmune disease, including Hashimoto’s thyroiditis (please see the March 2002 issue of *Nutrition & Healing* for further explanation of how grain allergy can cause autoim-

mune diseases). For this reason, it’s frequently helpful to eliminate all gluten/gliadin containing grains (all but rice and corn) as well as all milk and dairy products from your diet for at least a several month trial period. Although this diet change doesn’t cure the problem every time, it helps do the job often enough to be worth trying.

Conventional treatment of Hashimoto’s disease uses thyroid hormone to suppress the formation of antibodies. The theory appears to be that the suppression of antibodies will reduce the autoimmune destruction of the thyroid gland, and that if this suppression continues on long enough; the underlying problem may just go away. Sometimes this appears to be so, even though no one knows why.

In the 1940s, Dr. Benjamin Sieve

published data showing us that relatively high quantities of the B-vitamin para-aminobenzoic acid, or PABA, could also suppress the development of anti-thyroid antibodies. I’ve used Dr. Sieve’s suggestion with my patients, and have found it to be very helpful in many cases. One to two grams of PABA three to four times daily are usually necessary to get the job done. However, a caution: Large amounts of PABA, usually more than 10 grams total daily, can occasionally cause a fever and a rash. The Physician’s Desk Reference advises us that “neutropenia” (a low white blood cell count) can result from large amounts of PABA. So, it’s wisest to only use these amounts of PABA when working with a health care





practitioner skilled and knowledgeable in nutritional therapies.

Thanks for your letter. I invite practitioners who write to us here at *Nutrition & Healing*, to allow us to publish their names and locations so that our readers can find them if they wish. **JVW**

Standing firm—AGAINST mercury dental fillings

Q: In your March 2001 issue, you make inflammatory and erroneous statements on the lack of safety of dental amalgam.

You use unscientific and misleading words like “every physician and dentist...knows” without putting these amounts in perspective or confirming the proof of your figures and the significances of these estimates, to a largely lay audience, your words are certainly not supported by the vast scientific literature on the subject.

We have known for centuries that the dose makes the poison even in your so-called natural remedies!

You then counsel your readers “don’t have dental amalgam placed”...and that “there are abundant alternatives” and “most of which are much safer.” **EACH COUNSEL IS WRONG!**

The alternative gold is a cellular toxic and very expensive. Porcelain is non-toxic, expensive, and requires much tooth reduction and excessive wear on the opposing natural teeth. The other alternative is the new tooth colored composites, which are more functional than the previously used tooth-colored materials, but are known

to be xenoestrogens! At this time, it is not known if there is any evidence of long-term systemic effects in the use of the new tooth-colored fillings.

However, we do know that xenoestrogens are being investigated in the rising incidence in this country of low sperm counts and hypospadias in men and breast cancer in women.

If, indeed, mercury poisoning can be produced by the release of metal from amalgam fillings, then the reported ill effects should correspond to established patterns of mercury toxicity—but such is not the case. It is obvious that the reported symptoms do not fit any one pattern of mercury toxicity.

Your poor evaluation and examination of the role of dental amalgam filling material calls into question the accuracy of your entire publication.

---Dr. K. W.T., St. Louis, Missouri

A: Hmmm....as the column pointed out, an FDA spokesperson was quoted in January 2001 warning pregnant and nursing mothers and small children not to eat swordfish, king mackerel, shark, and tilefish due to their mercury content. Later in the year, more warnings were issued about the mercury in certain vaccines. Is it possible that perhaps the FDA knows something about the dangers of mercury that you don’t?

Research from Doctors’ Data laboratory (Chicago) shows conclusively that those of us with mercury-containing dental amalgams excrete 10 times the amount of mercury through our bowels than those without any dental amalgam. While transiting the bowel,

some of that mercury is transformed into even more toxic forms of mercury, such as methylmercury.

Which are then absorbed into our bodies to damage our brains, kidneys, immune systems ...the list goes on.

Please check our website (www.wrightnewsletter.com) for citations to studies proving that dental mercury gets into our bodies in very significant quantities and also passes from a mother’s fillings to her developing fetus!^{1,2,3} (Please write back if you can refute these carefully done studies.)

One day, hopefully, I will be able to write that every physician and dentist knows the hazards of mercury-containing dental amalgam, unfortunately, that happy day hasn’t yet arrived.

In the meantime, thank you for giving me the opportunity to re-state my recommendation from March 2001, which is based on very sound science:

Don’t have dental amalgams placed in pregnant mothers, infants, or young children...and while we’re at it, don’t put them in anyone else, at any age, either! There are abundant alternatives, most of which are much safer. (My only point of agreement with you is that *no* dental material is perfectly safe.) And by the way: watch out for the FDA’s “favorite four” fish, too. **JVW**

Nutrition & Healing website log-on information (JULY)

Username: mercury
Password: chamomile

ALTERNATIVE HEALTH RESOURCES

American College for the Advancement in Medicine

Phone: (800)532-3688, (714)583-7666
www.acam.org

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

Phone: (703)610-9037, (877)969-2267
www.naturopathic.org

American Academy of Environmental Medicine

Phone: (316)684-5500
www.aam.org

International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists

Phone: (800)927-4227, (281)933-8400
www.iacprx.org

International College of Integrative Medicine

Phone: (866)464-5226
www.icimed.com

Tahoma Clinic and Dispensary

Phone: (425)264-0059
www.tahoma-clinic.com